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REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Report of the Administrator

PURPOSE

The present report is prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolutions 53/192, 50/120 and 47/199 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1994/33 and 1998/27.

EXECUTIVE BOARD ACTION

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report and transmit it, with its comments, to the Council.

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I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM PROGRAMME OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND THE PROVISIONS OF THE TRIENNIAL COMPREHENSIVE POLICY REVIEW

A. Structures and mechanisms

1. The reform programme of the Secretary-General has provided a strong boost to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/120 of 20 December 1995 on operational activities. It is thereby also facilitating the implementation of the provisions of the recent General Assembly resolution 53/192 of 15 December 1998. The creation of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and its Executive Committee, has permitted accelerated implementation of numerous provisions of triennial policy legislation, which had shown steady but modest progress over previous triennial comprehensive policy reviews (TCPR).

2. With previous legislation, particularly General Assembly resolutions 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and 50/120, there had been a reliance on the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP) as a coordinating and implementing mechanism for many legislative provisions, a role for which JCGP had not originally been designed.

3. As a consultative mechanism, however, JCGP has created considerable team spirit among the funds and programmes and has produced numerous concrete outputs, as required by past triennial review legislation, on programme harmonization, harmonization of policies and procedures, common premises, gender equality and personnel, among other areas. The body continues now in its original form as a consultative mechanism that meets prior to the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) to enable JCGP members to confer on positions they plan to take at ACC.

4. JCGP has an annually rotating permanent secretariat and its constant challenge has been to maintain its institutional memory and ensure continuity of action. UNDG, however, has the United Nations Development Group Office (DGO) as a permanent secretariat, as well as numerous sub-groups where, through specific memorandums outlining tasks, UNDG members are held responsible for achieving clear targets and benchmarks. UNDG and its Executive Committee are clearly accountable to the Secretary-General for the achievement of specific results within a time-frame as called for by legislation.

5. The reform programme and legislation have provided for a coherent coordination structure at headquarters and the country level, where the UNDP Administrator chairs UNDG, UNDP manages and funds the resident coordinator system and the UNDP resident representative is normally the resident coordinator. UNDP also has as one of its Executive Board-mandated goals (see decision 94/14 of 10 June 1994), "to help the United Nations family become a unified and powerful force for sustainable human development" (DP/1994/39, para.21 (b)). This unified, linked managerial structure provides for clear reporting lines, since resident coordinators report to the Administrator, as well as considerable cohesion and accountability for results.

Lessons learned and problems

6. UNDG has taken the lead on a number of initiatives to enhance the coordination of operational activities such as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), common premises and the resident coordinator system. While an effort has been made to involve the country teams themselves as well as the United Nations system as a whole through such ACC machinery as the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ), these are clearly two areas for further effort in 1999 and beyond. There is a growing interest among agencies of the United Nations system to be involved in some key UNDG initiatives from the outset. Similarly, during 1999, it will be important to associate the country teams in the policy development work of UNDG, possibly even delegating such work or portions of it to country teams, both to provide a reality check and to tailor the provisions to field conditions.

Recommendation

7. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the management structures now in place and functioning for the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review legislation as a result of the reform;

(b) Encourage further use of UNDG machinery for the implementation of resolution 53/192;

(c) Call upon the member entities of UNDG to ensure that, in its future work, UNDG consults closely with resident coordinators and country teams, as well as with the member agencies of ACC, through CCPOQ, during the development of additional initiatives;

(d) Consider encouraging the governing bodies of agencies of the United Nations system to take greater and more active participation in such UNDG initiatives as the UNDAF, in which they have been invited to take part.

B. Funding

8. The landmark Executive Board decision 98/23 of 23 September 1998 paved the way for a new era in the core funding of UNDP. UNDP is currently in the process of developing the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) that integrates programme objectives, resources, budget and outcomes. The overall objective of the MYFF is to increase core resources; in doing so, it will both serve as the basis for future multi-year funding by all UNDP contributor countries and outline the results to be achieved with the announced resources.

Lessons learned and problems

9. The adoption of Executive Board decision 98/23 was the result of an extensive consultation process through 13 formal and many more informal meetings during the first three quarters of 1998. The consultation process revealed the importance of early confidence-building among the different stakeholders,

especially programme and donor countries. An important lesson learned is the need to establish early a sense of ownership on the part of all stakeholders, who need to trust the process and be confident that their interests will be fairly considered and accommodated.

10. Another finding was that for a voluntarily funded entity, a balanced funding formula needs to be developed to provide for multi-year commitments.

11. In addition, it was found that at the 1998 United Nations pledging conference only some 5 per cent of total expected pledges for UNDP for 1999 could be made. Many major donors were not in a position to pledge because of the timing of their national budget cycles. The second regular session of the Executive Board in April 1999 will provide the first opportunity for announcing UNDP core funding commitments within the context of the Executive Board.

12. The general lesson from the previous experience of UNDP with single-year pledging and funding is that it introduces a measure of uncertainty and unpredictability in annual programming levels, with a consequent negative impact on actual programmes. It is expected that the successful implementation of the multi-year funding framework will help to provide greater predictability to annual programming levels.

Recommendations

13. In view of the above and in line with General Assembly resolution 50/227 of 24 May 1996, the Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the progress achieved so far by UNDP in developing its multi-year funding framework (MYFF);

(b) Call upon Member States to increase core funding for all United Nations operational activities on a continued, assured and predictable basis;

(c) Take note of the outcome of the funding session linked to the MYFF during the UNDP and UNFPA Executive Board at its second regular session 1999, and of the views of Member States;

(d) Provide the General Assembly with recommendations on the future of the United Nations pledging conference, taking into account the views expressed by Member States.

C. Resident coordinator system

14. In its resolution 53/192, the General Assembly noted "the improvements in the functioning of the resident coordinator system and encourage[d] further progress, in close consultation with national Governments" (part I.D., para. 24). During 1998, with sizeable support from UNDP, considerable progress was made in the resident coordinator system in the areas of:

(a) A widened pool for selection of resident coordinators: 21 out of 131 resident coordinators are currently from United Nations entities other than

UNDP whereas in 1993 only 1 was from outside UNDP. The number of female resident coordinators has also increased from 10 per cent in 1993 to 21 per cent in 1998;

(b) Competency assessment of resident coordinator candidates: in November 1998, the first 40 resident coordinator candidates were subject to a competency assessment, a tool for examining the suitability of candidates for the position of resident coordinator; the costs of developing the assessment were covered primarily by UNDP;

(c) A faster and simpler process for the nomination, selection and clearance of resident coordinators: UNDG and subsequently CCPOQ adopted the following principles for an enhanced selection process for resident coordinators: (i) greater transparency, consultation and ownership in the selection process; (ii) greater speed in the selection and clearance processes, including ad hoc selections outside the annual cycle; (iii) the nomination by each agency of the best and brightest candidates; and (iv) the identification of the best possible candidate for each resident coordinator post. Based on these principles, with the support of UNDP, the new Inter-agency Advisory Panel met in December 1998 to review candidates to present to the Administrator;

(d) Separate performance appraisal of resident coordinators: the first resident coordinator appraisal process was completed in 1998, in which all members of ACC were invited to participate. Within UNDG, UNDP played a lead role in developing this appraisal tool. In addition, resident coordinators were asked to report regularly on cooperation of United Nations country team members, consistent with the philosophy that all country team members must "wear two hats", that of the agency that they represent and that of the United Nations system as a whole;

(e) Reporting and accountability guidelines for resident coordinators: after consultation with members of UNDG, the Administrator has provided written guidance to all resident coordinators on the reporting lines and accountability for their function as resident coordinators. New measures are under consideration to ensure that resident coordinators are strong programme advocates for all United Nations organizations;

(f) A separate and distinct job description for resident coordinators: an up-to-date, comprehensive job description for resident coordinators was developed and endorsed by CCPOQ in September 1998;

(g) Revised annual reporting procedures for resident coordinators: the guidelines for the annual reports have been revised in consultation with CCPOQ to provide a clearer basis for assessing the work of resident coordinators and United Nations country teamwork, including the preparation of an annual work plan.

Lessons learned and problems

15. The main feedback tool on the resident coordinator system has proven to be the annual report of the resident coordinator. It is the one instrument that records the entire progress of the resident coordinator system at the country level as compared with the established objectives for the year. Taken together, the reports of all the resident coordinators provide an invaluable overview of the system as a whole worldwide. Covering the period 1997, compliance with the reporting requirement was nearly 100 per cent in 1998. The new procedures for the report have resulted in work plans for 1998 having been developed for some 129 out of 131 countries.

16. In their reports, some resident coordinators have reported that some country team members have difficulty in "wearing two hats", namely that of a country team member and that of representative of their organization. Accordingly, while team members may be personally committed to cooperation, the task of coordination is made difficult because of separate agency mandates, preoccupation with agency-based programming and project/programme implementation, different programming and operational procedures and time constraints. The lack of reference to a work plan for 1997 caused in some cases the self-assessment of the country team to be somewhat uncritical and superficial, without references to difficulties and problems.

17. Many reports, however, provided good self-assessments, with well-structured, well-analysed and impact-oriented accounts of the work accomplished by the country team. A review of the reports received also revealed the importance of continuity in resident coordinator leadership and of the presence of a competent leader for the success of the work of the resident coordinator system in a given country. Countries where the resident coordinator had been reassigned and interim resident coordinator arrangements were in place did not exhibit the same level of achievement as those where an effective resident coordinator was in place. This would point to the importance of better planning in reassigning resident coordinators to avoid long gaps in filling posts. To avoid future problems, when a resident coordinator ad interim should be designated immediately when a resident coordinator is reassigned. The departing resident coordinator should prepare a handover note specifically on resident coordinator matters, in addition to the traditional handover note on UNDP resident representative matters. The note should cover the status of operations of the resident coordinator system, so that the resident coordinator ad interim or the new resident coordinator can rapidly assume the resident coordinator function, including preparing the annual report. The Administrator wrote to all resident coordinators on the subject on 4 December 1998, detailing arrangements for acting resident coordinators.

18. From the review of the resident coordinators' annual reports, it appears that timely, country-specific, meaningful feedback should continue to be provided by DGO, taking into account the views of the United Nations system entities participating in the resident coordinator system in the particular country in question.

Recommendations

19. The Council may wish to take note of the progress achieved in 1998 under the resident coordinator system and provide further guidance along the following lines:

(a) Call upon all entities participating in each resident coordinator's country team to instruct their representatives to give priority consideration to system-wide and coordination concerns, in addition to their individual agency concerns, where common initiatives are being considered, just as is required of the resident coordinator;

(b) Call for rapid progress to improve the self-assessment process of the country team as a whole as measured against the work plans established;

(c) Call upon entities of the country team to provide additional support to the resident coordinator system, in line with paragraph 27 of General Assembly resolution 53/192, including, as appropriate, financial and staff support to country-level coordination activities, funding of thematic group work, and instructions to country team members on effective collaboration with the resident coordinator;

(d) Recognize the central importance of the annual report of the resident coordinator as an oversight tool for the resident coordinator system;

(e) Call upon all entities of country teams to participate actively in the preparation of the annual report of the resident coordinator, providing substantive inputs as needed, under the leadership of the resident coordinator.

D. Planning, programming and implementation and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

20. Following the structure of General Assembly resolution 53/192, this section considers programming processes, the common country assessment (CCA) and the UNDAF, collaboration with the World Bank, as well as implementation matters such as common premises.

21. Legislative recognition of the UNDAF through General Assembly resolution 53/192 is expected to promote the effective use of this instrument to achieve greater programme focus, coherence and collaboration, in line with the reform programme of the Secretary-General.

Lessons learned and problems

22. While there has been considerable progress in developing and piloting the UNDAF as a tool for collaboration, there is still considerable headway to be made towards the goal of programme coherence. In this connection, UNDG members and the UNDG Sub-group on Programme Policies are still grappling with two problems:

(a) How to formulate a framework that is strategic and looks holistically at the potential contribution of the United Nations system to national development rather than simply amalgamating individual mandates and concerns, with the UNDAF as a canopy over these;

(b) Having formulated a framework, how to ensure that its provisions are integrated into the strategy documents as well as into the country programmes of participating United Nations entities.

23. A related lesson learned from experience with CCAs used to prepare UNDAFs is that there is a need to ensure that the CCA is more analytical, participatory (involving a broad array of development partners) and capable of increasing advocacy and policy dialogue, especially between the concerned Government and the United Nations system.

24. An unresolved issue is the extent to which United Nations entities use the CCA and UNDAF to streamline their programming and review processes and instruments. UNDP has, for example, decided to dispense with the advisory note (which becomes optional for the country office) and programme outlines. As recommended by the UNDAF Assessment Workshop held in September 1998, it is important that UNDG members as a whole make similar simplifications to lessen the burden on country offices and their government counterparts.

25. Another problem is that the different operational policies and procedures of United Nations entities and agencies pose a singular challenge to actual operational inter-agency collaboration within the context of the UNDAF. Monitoring and evaluation of the UNDAF continues to be a challenge, particularly determining the relationships between monitoring and evaluation at the level of country programmes and at the level of the UNDAF.

26. In terms of process, the widespread introduction of the CCA and UNDAF call for a review of the functions, organization and membership of thematic groups within the resident coordinator system since they are expected to play a key role in formulation and follow-up.

27. Finally, the CCA and the UNDAF also call for the development or strengthening of skills for strategic planning and policy analysis as well as increased knowledge of the global development agendas agreed on at United Nations conferences and conventions. At the same time, United Nations entities, at both the headquarters and the country levels, still need to find appropriate ways of recognizing and rewarding staff participation and contributions to inter-agency activities such as the UNDAF.

Cooperation with the World Bank

28. Regarding cooperation with the World Bank, one concrete, successful example in 1998 was the joint review for the Economic and Social Council of collaboration among UNDG, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. However, much progress remains to be achieved on the question of mutual consultation on the programming and forward planning of operational activities. The World Bank has announced a pilot effort in 10 countries where comprehensive development frameworks are to be established. It is extremely important to

ensure complementarity between these new frameworks and the UNDAF and country programmes of the United Nations funds and programmes. To that end, UNDG has initiated exploratory consultations with the World Bank.

Regional dimensions

29. With regard to the regional dimension of operational activities referred to in paragraph 41 of General Assembly resolution 53/192 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998, UNDP has now reactivated the UNDP Regional Commissions Task Force and a draft strategic compact has been prepared and is under discussion to clarify further mutual roles and expectations. In this regard, it is important that a new partnership be developed between UNDP and the regional commissions, where UNDP is seen as a substantive partner in sustainable human development, as mandated in Executive Board decision 94/14 of 10 June 1994, inter alia, and not only as a funder of operational activities, the traditional role in which the commissions have tended to view UNDP.

Common premises and services

30. In 1998, the Management Group on Services and Premises, a decision-making body composed of the directors of finance and administration of the four UNDG Executive Committee member entities, supported at the working level by the UNDG Sub-group on Common Premises and Services, advanced still further the agenda of the United Nations house. In 1998, 30 offices were identified as meeting the criteria for United Nations houses and have been designated or are pending official designation as such by the Secretary-General. The UNDG principals are presently examining the budgetary implications of alternate action plans to expand the number of United Nations houses, with scenarios that, over the next three years, would establish between 10 to 25 new United Nations houses.

31. Serious work on common services is yet to begin and is essential to ensure that the United Nations houses in fact lead to overall cost-savings in the longer term. A project financed by a trust fund from a major donor country is funding the collection of systematic information for management decision-making to expand common services. The Guidelines on Administrative Management of the Resident Coordinator System, approved by CCPOQ in September 1998, are expected to help to promote common services by providing a basis for their equitable co-management by user entities, a question that had hindered their expansion in the past.

32. Some of the lessons learned in the area of common premises are as follows. The initial overall financial cost-savings of a move to a United Nations house are limited in the majority of cases reviewed although the non-quantified benefits of co-location in terms of enhanced collaboration and cooperation may be considerable. Most existing premises are insufficient in size to accommodate all UNDG Executive Committee member entities. Buildings of sufficient size to accommodate all entities are in short supply in many countries and accommodation in them, where available, may involve significant additional rent and other costs. The modality of seeking adequate rent-free premises from Governments needs to be pursued further. Land grants from Governments are not an optimal modality because the risks and costs of building by the United Nations entities are very high and detract from the ability of the organizations to pursue their

mandates. Buildings and ownership also cause a marketability problem if the entity decides to move out. Even where the establishment of common premises is not financially feasible, there may still be wide scope for common or shared services. Recent pilot experiences in Guatemala and Zimbabwe have shown that tangible benefits can be gained from such innovations.

Recommendations

33. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the challenges cited above and call upon the funds and programmes in their efforts to simplify and harmonize procedures to operate with the medium-term goal of seeking to achieve an UNDAF that is truly a United Nations system response to national priorities rather than a canopy for independent individual programmes. The individual country programmes of the funds and programmes would then be, as envisioned in action 10 (a) of the Secretary-General's reform programme (A/51/950, para. 151), mutually consistent and complementary parts of a whole;

(b) Call upon UNDG and CCPOQ to examine the possibilities for the use of the UNDAF as a frame of reference, in accordance with national priorities and the Government's overall coordinating role, for the coordination of operational activities of other donors outside the United Nations system at the country level;

(c) Call upon United Nations entities to examine ways to further simplify their programming procedures and instruments concomitantly with the introduction of the UNDAF;

(d) Take note of and encourage the efforts of UNDG to seek ways of collaborating with the World Bank on the UNDAF process and the Comprehensive Development Framework, recognizing the Bank's distinct governance structures and mandate;

(e) Take note of progress in collaboration between UNDP and the regional commissions and highlight the need for the commissions to rely upon UNDP as a substantive partner in sustainable human development activities at the regional level;

(f) Take note of the new approach to common premises and services, both at the UNDG and the CCPOQ levels, and encourage further progress, emphasizing the principles of shared governance, transparency, quality assurance and clear cost benefits.

E. Gender balance

34. In June 1998, UNDP adopted the Policy on Gender Balance in Management (Phase II): 1998-2001, within the framework of the UNDP reform programme UNDP 2001. During the period 1998-2001, the goal of UNDP is to reach a minimum ratio of 4:6 (women:men) for all locally recruited and internationally recruited staff. By the end of the year 2001, the ratio of senior management positions at

headquarters is also expected to be a minimum of 4:6 (women:men). Furthermore, by the year 2001, a minimum of 38 per cent of resident representative positions and 40 per cent of deputy resident representatives positions are to be occupied by women.

Lessons learned and problems

35. From the evaluation of the impact of the Policy on Gender Balance in Management (1995-1997), UNDP learned that the commitment of senior management was essential for breaking the glass ceiling for professional women in top management positions. It was the implementation of this policy that created the conditions that enabled UNDP to increase the number of women assigned to senior management positions.

36. From 1994 to the end of 1997, the gender profile of the UNDP Executive Committee changed considerably, with a threefold increase from 1 to 3 in the number of female members. Since 1994, the number of women at the D-2 level almost doubled, from 8 to 15, as did the number of female resident representatives, which rose from 14 to 26.

37. This major achievement in the advancement of women in management was due largely to specific, targeted action at the highest levels to promote and recruit women to senior positions. Despite this achievement and considerable effort, UNDP did not reach the target set in the Policy on Gender Balance in Management (1995-1997) for an overall gender ratio of 38:62 (women:men) among its internationally recruited workforce; in fact, there was a decline in the overall ratio of women to men. UNDP also did not achieve the targets for the D-1 level, resident representatives and deputy resident representatives. The shortfall was due in part to the recent downsizing exercise, when many women at the P-3 through P-5 level left the organization. These departures disproportionately affected women, particularly those in mid-career.

Recommendation

38. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the lessons learned by UNDP in the implementation of its gender balance policy;

(b) Call for further efforts to retain women at mid-career and encourage implementation of Phase II of the policy;

(c) Offer further guidance on achieving gender balance, in light of its review of similar policies of other United Nations entities.

F. Gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication

39. In its decision 94/14, the Executive Board mandated both poverty eradication and the advancement of women as mainstream focus areas for UNDP. The advancement of women is an integral part of UNDP work in poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods for the poor, to which 39 per cent of UNDP core

resources are currently devoted. A key dimension of the UNDP approach to poverty eradication is the empowerment of the poor, especially poor women. UNDP thereby addresses both income poverty as well as issues of gender equality.

Lessons learned and problems

40. UNDP experience and the research it has commissioned show that in addressing the feminization of poverty it is important to go beyond an income-generation approach, for example, through micro-credit schemes for female heads of household, to address more fundamental issues such as improving people's capabilities - literacy, health and nutritional levels - as well as their entitlements to assets and resources. Many studies, such as the Human Development Report 1997, for example, indicate that the low status of women also makes their households poorer; there is an empirical link at the aggregate level between gender inequality and overall human poverty. Gender inequality leads to the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next as malnourished mothers give birth to low-birth-weight children and poorly educated mothers are less able to foster the education of their children. An illustrative case of the UNDP approach to mainstreaming gender concerns is the South Asia Poverty Alleviation Programme, which has both increased women's incomes and empowered them socially and economically.

41. In coming years, UNDP, with its United Nations and other partners, needs to address two unresolved problems in gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication:

(a) The macro dimensions of human poverty, including the need to strengthen gender-aware macro-economic planning and policy-making, which will call for improved statistics, especially in the critical areas of the use of time as well as national accounting and unremunerated labour;

(b) Participation and empowerment, stressing community efforts to address their own poverty, especially the poverty of women, by tackling their deprivation in basic capabilities and entitlements, but also by linking these efforts, as appropriate, with initiatives at the meso and macro levels.

Recommendations

42. The Council may wish to:

(a) Take note of the lessons learned by UNDP in the area of gender mainstreaming and poverty eradication and welcome the two-pronged approach to addressing gender inequality and poverty eradication followed by UNDP through (i) income-generation and (ii) promoting entitlements and capabilities;

(b) Call upon United Nations entities and invite agencies of the system to collaborate with UNDP in further developing and implementing such a two-pronged strategy, particularly through CCAs, UNDAFs and country programmes at the country level, as well as through studies and projects at the regional and global levels.

G. National execution

43. During 1998, UNDP conducted further policy and procedures work in national execution on two levels: (a) at the level of UNDP itself, where revised procedures for national execution were issued effective 1 April 1998 and (b) at the level of CCPOQ, where UNDP served as task manager in developing common guidelines for national execution for the United Nations system. While it is still too early to measure the impact of the revised procedures of UNDP, the thrust of the new procedures was to follow up on Executive Board decision 98/2 of 23 January 1998 on the policy implications of non-core funding, including country office support to national execution and to incorporate the findings of the national execution evaluation.

Lessons learned and problems

44. During 1998, UNDP led the CCPOQ effort to develop common guidelines on national execution for the United Nations system and the resulting chapter on national execution of the CCPOQ operational activities manual was formally adopted by CCPOQ at its 13th session in September. Two unresolved issues within the United Nations system, where agency practices vary considerably, had made reaching consensus particularly difficult: (a) approaches to the channelling of funds in national execution and (b) the extent to which agencies and entities are involved in implementation under national execution.

45. The present consensus leaves ample margin in both areas for agencies to operate according to their own legislation and rules and regulations. While there are still some agencies that prefer channelling resources through their own systems as well as executing programmes in order to avoid some of the problems associated with national execution, many more agencies are increasingly willing to transfer execution to national authorities when capacity clearly exists. The CCPOQ guidelines represent the common denominator feasible in terms of harmonization at the present time. However, additional guidance from governing bodies would further harmonization efforts by reaffirming the spirit of national execution and encouraging agencies to strive to involve national project managements progressively, both in direct management of funds through advances by the funding entities as well as in the actual implementation of national execution.

Recommendations

46. Based on the above lessons learned, the Council may wish to:

(a) Welcome the adoption of common national execution guidelines by CCPOQ;

(b) Call upon the United Nations member entities of CCPOQ and invite the member agencies of CCPOQ to review their existing policies, procedures, rules and regulations to permit greater involvement, where national capacity exists or as it develops, of national project managements in both the management of project funds as well as programme implementation.

H. Monitoring and evaluation

47. Paragraphs 52 to 57 of General Assembly resolution 53/192 provide a clear legislative basis for future work in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

Lessons learned and problems

48. During 1998, the focus of UNDP was on results-based management and on developing the tools to put the concept into practice and to link it to the new multi-year funding framework. Experience shows that for results-based management to be effective, it is important to make results part of the managerial culture of the organization. Results and corresponding indicators need to be introduced into the compacts of individual units, country offices and bureaux. Accordingly, the capacity of the Evaluation Office has been focused in 1998 on supporting managers of programmes and operations to develop credible indicators for results. UNDP needs to shift its focus from outputs, which tend to be specific, concrete and limited to outcomes that are broader and more closely linked to national development objectives themselves. Increasingly, with the programme approach and upstream policy work, it makes more sense for UNDP to focus on outcomes that result from the contributions of many stakeholders under the leadership of the Government rather on the outputs that resulted from a traditional project. There is a closer link between outcomes and long-term impact. In 1998, UNDP also focused on the linkage between evaluation on the one hand and knowledge and learning on the other, feeding back the results of evaluations to operational units in the form of publications, bulletins and participation by Evaluation Office staff in the Programme Management Oversight Committee and in resident representative cluster meetings.

49. Another lesson learned is that monitoring and evaluation need to be more closely linked than in the past. In the past, monitoring has focused on reviewing the compliance with work plans and listed outputs. Monitoring needs to become more of a self-evaluation by programme management, introducing elements of evaluation even during the programme's life. These interim self-evaluation conclusions are often far more valuable than the ex post information of evaluations because the interim conclusions can be used to reorient or redirect programme operations.

50. In addition, under the programme approach, which is increasingly used, both monitoring and evaluation need to take account of the contributions of other stakeholders, including donors. The single-donor focus of traditional monitoring and evaluation needs to be overcome since the decentralized and multi-actor nature of the programme approach makes it very difficult to single out the actual effect of any single donor contribution. It is more meaningful to look at the shared outcomes.

51. Regarding joint evaluations, UNDP experience to date shows that they are time-consuming to organize and that the main challenge is not technical but managerial and organizational, involving consultations with a number of agencies and their counterpart ministries, which, in turn, need to consult with others in their Government. There is already a common understanding on basic concepts of evaluation and it is not necessary to develop any additional specific methodology for joint evaluations as such a methodology would introduce an

unnecessary rigidity. The approach to joint evaluations needs to be practical and flexible, adapted to local circumstances.

52. In 1998, UNDP continued as Chair of the Inter-agency Working Group on Evaluation, which is addressing the five problems of: (a) results-based management; (b) knowledge and learning; (c) harmonization of evaluation procedures; (d) evaluation and the programme approach; and (e) reinforcing national evaluation capacities.

53. As a permanent observer of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), UNDP, jointly with the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), assisted the OECD/DAC Secretariat in organizing in New York in October 1998 a workshop on results-based management. The lessons learned from that working party meeting were: (a) systems of results-based management need to be kept as simple as possible as they tend to become very complex; (b) results should not be tied mechanistically to resources - unachieved results are not, for example, necessarily grounds for cutting resources for an activity; (c) the objectives of results-based management should be clarified to serve either as a management tool or a means of accountability or a source of information; (d) outcomes are more relevant than outputs to ensure aid credibility; (e) rather than adopting standard formulas, results-based management should be adapted to individual organizational cultures; and (f) implementing results-based management takes time and involves learning by the whole organization.

Recommendations

54. Based on the lessons learned and the problems raised, the Council may wish to provide guidance on the following points:

(a) Promoting joint evaluation in the United Nations to assess impact and capacity-building;

(b) Calling upon United Nations entities to promote capacity-building for evaluation in their programme activities in the area of public sector management;

(c) Calling for a pragmatic approach to joint evaluations since the problems are managerial and organizational rather than technical.

II. INTEGRATED AND COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION OF AND FOLLOW-UP TO MAJOR UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

55. As called for in Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/44 of 31 July 1998, UNDP has stressed in its work during 1998 the importance of integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences both in its programme work as well as through its role as funder and manager of the resident coordinator system. For example, in its resolution 1998/44 the Council "reiterates that poverty eradication and improving the living conditions of people everywhere are key development objectives of the Council's efforts to ensure integrated and coordinated follow-up to conferences" (part I, para.1).

Through its programme and its support to the resident coordinator system, UNDP has sought to promote poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods as an overarching goal. The UNDP Poverty Report 1998: Overcoming Human Poverty details some of that work and findings emerging from it. UNDP also led the effort in CCPOQ to produce the second guidance note to the resident coordinator system on conference follow-up, which firmly places the resident coordinator system at the centre of future United Nations system efforts in this area and proposes some successor arrangements to the inter-agency task forces, which have completed their assignments.

56. In its statement to the Economic and Social Council's session on the follow-up to conferences, which was held on 13-15 May 1998, UNDP tabled several problems that continue to beset the integrated and coordinated (i.e., horizontal) follow-up to conferences: (a) the relative lack of political support for the horizontal follow-up to conferences as opposed to the conference-by-conference (vertical) follow-up, for which individual agencies have clear legislative mandates and reporting obligations; (b) the lack of indicators to permit effective integrated and coordinated follow-up while sectoral indicators for individual conferences are more abundant; and (c) the lack of realization of the funding expectations generated by the conferences to the extent provided for in the programmes of action. These three challenges should be an important focus of Council deliberations and recommendations.

Lessons learned

57. The analysis of the resident coordinator reports covering 1997 and resident coordinator replies to the TCPR questionnaire revealed that the establishment and operation of thematic groups had positively influenced the coordination of operational activities relating specifically to the integrated and coordinated follow-up to United Nations conferences. Thematic groups devoted to such subjects as poverty eradication and gender equality permitted the specific consideration of cross-cutting themes that individual agencies might not always address as they undertake their mandated monitoring related to individual conferences.

58. An important element contributing to the success of thematic groups was the participation of stakeholders from the Government, civil society and the private sector, who provided an essential reality check to the deliberations with regard to the national context. Such participation should be strongly encouraged. Some resident coordinators signed memorandums of understanding with these participants to ensure mutual understanding of the roles and nature of participation. The most successful thematic groups were those led by agencies with a clear specialized capacity or a comparative advantage in the subject area.

Recommendation

59. The Council may wish to take note of the points raised above and provide guidance along the following lines:

(a) Call upon the governing bodies of United Nations entities to consider devoting specific resources to horizontal follow-up in addition to the already

mandated vertical follow-up, addressing the need to balance the clearly legislated mandate for vertical follow-up of individual conferences on the one hand with the Council's requirement for integrated and coordinated or horizontal follow-up on the other hand;

(b) Re-emphasize strongly the central importance of thematic or theme groups within the resident coordinator system as a tool for horizontal follow-up so that these groups are organized around truly cross-cutting themes such as poverty eradication rather than around the themes of individual conferences alone;

(c) Reiterate the importance of making conference follow-up a major pillar of each UNDAF prepared;

(d) Call for the annual report of the resident coordinator to serve increasingly as a major feedback and oversight tool for monitoring progress on United Nations operational activities relating to horizontal conference follow-up, in line with the CCPOQ guidelines on conference follow-up as well as the revised instructions on the annual report;

(e) Call for the implementation at the country level, through thematic groups and concrete operational activities, of Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/44 regarding "poverty eradication and ... improving living conditions..." (part I, para. 1).

III. FOLLOW-UP TO SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: AGREED CONCLUSIONS

60. The agreed conclusions of the humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session 1998 as well as General Assembly resolution 53/192 (part II C, paras. 38-40) provide a strong legislative basis for the interaction of operational activities and humanitarian assistance.

Lessons learned and problems

61. The primary concern of UNDP and other UNDG members in this area has been ensuring the compatibility and complementarity of operational activities and humanitarian assistance, particularly in countries in special circumstances. General Assembly resolution 53/192 refers to the need to develop a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis, through a strategic framework, as appropriate. Present inter-agency consultations, guidelines and practices also indicate clearly the need for a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis where, depending on the specific circumstances, the portfolio of available managerial instruments include the strategic framework, the consolidated appeal process and the UNDAF. The appropriate instruments need to be selected in a flexible and properly timed manner in order to respond to often rapidly changing and sometimes regressive circumstances.

62. Current guidelines indicate clearly that the strategic framework is an instrument to be used in exceptional circumstances, where the United Nations has an acknowledged political mandate and where certain unusual crisis conditions

exist. So far there has been only one country where a strategic framework has been formulated and a possible second country is under consideration for a strategic framework.

63. Similarly, the consolidated appeals process, as described in the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998, is a time-bound initiative geared to helping a country to mobilize resources for humanitarian needs at a time of emergency, with a programming dimension primarily for recovery.

64. The following represent findings based on country experiences:

(a) Earlier-held concepts and approaches to the relief and development continuum are no longer valid or adequate. It is increasingly recognized that crises rooted in political, social and economic problems do not respond to traditional formulas or to approaches that focus only on survival but not on sustainability. Development during crisis is a continuing phenomenon, from which the conclusion to be drawn is that crisis, reconstruction (recovery) and development are often three coexisting phases and must be recognized as such in a comprehensive and holistic approach to peace-building. Experience shows that the transition from one phase to another is non-linear and non-sequential. Countries can move back and forth through these phases. In such situations, a comprehensive approach needs to be adopted, which builds upon a wide partnership of assistance actors, including the United Nations system, donors, non-governmental organizations, and international financial institutions, supporting nationally led efforts to sustain livelihoods and rebuild communities;

(b) Humanitarian aid can only have a lasting effect if capacities are regenerated to foster sustainable recovery. Enabling conditions must be created for reintegration; restoring human security, constitutionality and the rule of law; civic empowerment; economic productivity; accountable governance and sustainable development;

(c) Within the United Nations system, the role of the resident/humanitarian coordinator must be strengthened through inter-agency support of country operations, harmonized programming and information-sharing;

(d) Disaster prevention and emergency preparedness must become major dimensions of development programmes, especially in disaster-prone areas for vulnerable communities. Local capacities and coping mechanisms must be regularly assessed and monitored and early warning indicators routinely analysed and reported on for preventive action at national and international levels;

(e) Better operational definitions of countries in special development situations should be elaborated;

(f) National capacity-building for preventive development should encompass minority rights, mediation and arbitration organs, dispute-resolution machinery, judicial and constitutional reform together with all other elements of participatory and sustainable governance.

65. However, the long-term recovery and development instrument should be the UNDAF and its underlying country programmes.

66. The 3 November 1998 joint meeting of the UNDG Executive Committee, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security provided a useful forum for the discussion of linkages between humanitarian assistance in emergencies, assistance for recovery and operational activities for development. The phase of recovery was much stressed at the meeting and requires further attention in the future. For the first time, the meeting brought together members of three Executive Committees. It also brought together the political, programmatic, budgetary and managerial aspects of humanitarian assistance and underscored the interconnectedness of the emergency, recovery and development phases. The meeting underlined the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to country-based action. While the meeting discussed linkages between the consolidated appeal process and the UNDAF, it proposed going beyond consideration of individual programming instruments to develop a versatile tool kit of instruments capable of addressing all phases of coordinated country programming, including: (a) the possibility of simultaneous action in response to both emergency and development; (b) the filling of gaps in the repertoire of tools; and (c) the reinforcement of the present tools, especially the CCA.

67. More consultations are also required on the proposed programming dimension of the consolidated appeal process as well as the use of the UNDAF in post-emergency recovery situations. These clarifications will be an important focus of the discussions between UNDG and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs during 1999. The flexibility of the UNDAF as well as its inherent, long-term character advocate strongly in favour of its use in post-conflict recovery situations. If properly designed, the UNDAF can assure the long-term transition from recovery to development as well as address the more immediate problem of coexistence of emergency, recovery and normal development operations in many countries.

Recommendations

68. While, as outlined above, an important legislative basis for the linkages and interaction between operational activities and humanitarian assistance has been established, the Council may wish to detail that legislative basis further by providing guidance along the following lines:

(a) Recognize that the strategic framework is designed for use only in exceptional circumstances;

(b) Recognize that the UNDAF and its underlying country programmes is a long-term development tool that can, if adequately prepared to include contingency planning, provide for post-crisis recovery as well as the transition to normal operational activities;

(c) Call upon UNDG, in revising the guidelines of the UNDAF, to include specific instructions for its use for post-crisis recovery and the transition to normal development;

(d) Call upon the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs in reviewing its guidelines for the consolidated appeals process, to ensure that the programming dimension for recovery is fully compatible with the UNDAF where it exists, and where it does not exist, paves the way, as appropriate, for an UNDAF, which would provide for long-term operational activities;

(e) Recognize, in consequence, that post-crisis recovery is a transition phase where both the programming dimension of the consolidated appeal process and the UNDAF can serve as useful and complementary tools, provided they are designed in consultation with the involved parties and entities;

(f) Call upon the Secretariat, in further developing these tools, to involve country teams fully in crisis countries so as to provide a reality check and sharing of experiences.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

69. The Executive Board may wish to:

1. Take note of the document "Reports to the Economic and Social Council: Report of the Administrator" (DP/1999/10);

2. Decide to transmit it to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments and guidance provided by delegations at the present session.